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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Letter dated 17 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to attach a copy of the statement made by His Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos of the Republic of the Philippines welcoming the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (see annex).

The statement was issued in Acapulco, Mexico, on 10 May 1997 during the President's state visit to Mexico.

I further have the honour to request that the present letter and the attached statement be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 167.

(Signed) Felipe MABILANGAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Statement made on 10 May 1997 at Acapulco, Mexico, by the President of the Republic of the Philippines on the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction

I would like to welcome the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. The Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on 29 April 1997, 180 days after the sixty-fifth deposit by a State party of its instrument of ratification.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a comprehensive agreement containing credible verification mechanisms aimed at abolishing an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

The Philippines is of the firm belief that this agreement, in which negotiations and drafting the Philippines actively participated, will serve effectively to prohibit the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and will lead to their destruction.

The Philippines has always been among those who have stressed the importance of universal participation in the Chemical Weapons Convention. Of particular importance is the participation of all possessors of chemical weapons, chemical weapons production facilities or chemical weapons development facilities. In addition, we have made calls for the two largest declared possessors of chemical weapons, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this regard, I would like to welcome in particular the recent ratification by the United States of the Convention. I would also like to welcome the positive efforts being exerted by the Government of the Russian Federation to ratify the Convention. I would also like to express the hope that Russia ratifies the Convention soon.

The next step now is to establish the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as provided for in the Convention. This is the body that will monitor and supervise the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The Philippines has been actively participating in the Preparatory Commission tasked with establishing OPCW. The next meeting of the Preparatory Commission this month will be a critical one and the Philippines will intensify its efforts as it continues to work actively with the other States parties to the Convention in establishing OPCW.

Philippine support for the Chemical Weapons Convention is part of our country's policy that true and lasting international and regional peace, stability and progress will be enhanced by the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the regulation of conventional weapons.